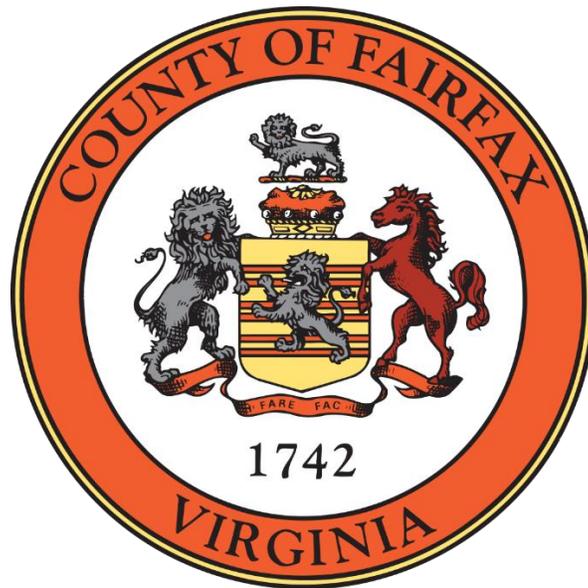


# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Reports



November 8, 2018  
Fairfax County, Virginia

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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The Task Force formed a number of Subcommittees to evaluate sports tourism opportunities that were identified by Task Force members. Copies of these reports are in order below:

- I. Indoor Ski & Snow Facilities:**
- II. Mountain Biking**
- III. Rectangle Field Complex**
- IV. Diamond Field Complex**
- V. Aquatic Competition Facility**
- VI. Field House/Indoor Track**
- VII. ESports**
- VIII. Tennis Complex**
- IX. Potential to Increase Current Tourism Opportunities**

\*Copies of these reports may be found at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/>

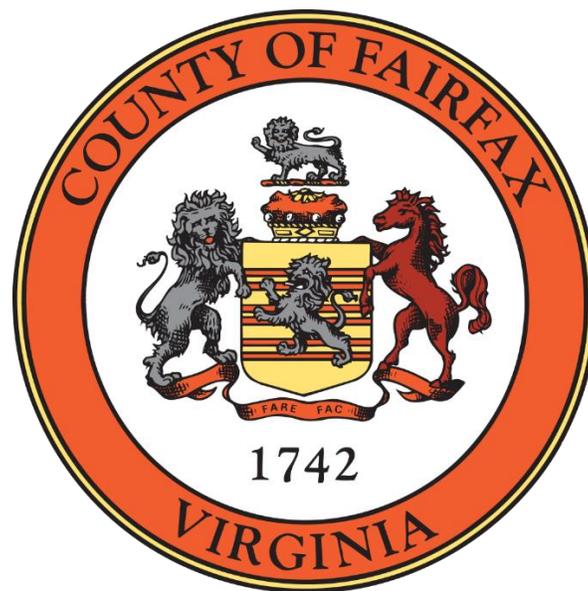
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Indoor Ski and Snow Sports Facilities*



November 8, 2018  
Fairfax County, Virginia

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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**Pat Herrity, Chair***Fairfax County Board of Supervisors***Dave Foreman***Chief of Staff, Supervisor Pat Herrity***Jeffrey Hokenson***Apline – X***Christine Morin***Chief of Staff, Supervisor Dan Storck***Tom Arehart***Alpine – X***Scott Sizer***Director, Office of the County Executive***Barry Biggar***CEO, Visit Fairfax***Chase Suddith***Analyst, Office of the County Executive***Paul Gilbert***Director, Nova Regional Parks***John Kellas***Director, Fairfax Waste Management***Rodney Lusk***Director, Fairfax County Economic  
Development Authority***Bill McCabe***Legislative Aide, Supervisor Pat Herrity*

The subcommittee on Indoor Ski and Snow Sports Facilities was established by the Sports Tourism Task Force to review and develop an opportunity to partner with SnowWorld USA to build an indoor ski and snow sports facility in Fairfax County. The subcommittee was tasked with identifying the needs of the facility, the estimated fiscal impacts, revenues and capital requirements, and how the facility would benefit our community at large.

SnowWorld USA is affiliated with SnowWorld which operates successful indoor ski and snow sports facilities throughout the world. There are currently no similar indoor facilities in North or South America. SnowWorld USA is looking to build up to 10 facilities in the US. Fairfax County is in the running to be one of the first locations in North America.

### **The Opportunity**

SnowWorld USA is looking to partner with Fairfax County in the development of the first indoor ski and snow sports facility in North America. It is anticipated that the facility would utilize the elevation of the county-owned landfill in Lorton and land in the Occoquan Regional Park, adjacent to the Workhouse Arts Center. In addition to downhill skiing, a half pipe is being considered to help achieve the goal of establishing a high performance year round training center. It is also anticipated that the facility would include a 100 room hotel and restaurant(s). The size, design and engineering details are still in the early stages, and SnowWorld is in the process of a detailed marketing study. Construction is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

As discussed in detail in later sections of this report, this sports tourism opportunity ranks high in a number of characteristics including:

- Minimal financial/facility requirements by the county and would provide an additional revenue stream from the lease of the county land.
- The facility would provide positive economic impacts for the county, state, local businesses and hotels, as well as benefit other public facilities in the area.
- The facility would provide county residents a sports opportunity not available anywhere else in the U.S.
- Similar to the facility in Dubai this facility is likely to attract national and international attention and further the county's economic development objectives.
- The facility would provide the ability to host nationally televised competitions, provide training for military and ski patrols, and provide year round training for national athletes.

The subcommittee believes this is an opportunity that Fairfax County should pursue. SnowWorld has been meeting with the community, Fairfax County and NOVA Parks staff, and other stakeholders with positive results to date. To keep the project in Fairfax County, the opportunity will likely need an expedited Public-Private-Partnership (P3) agreement, zoning and permitting process. Due to its significant projected positive cash flow, economic and sports benefits, the task force recommends that Fairfax County staff develop an aggressive timeline for reviewing the opportunity.

### **Facilities Requirements**

Unlike most of the other sports tourism opportunities being reviewed, this opportunity would not require significant financial investment by Fairfax County. The facility would be developed through a P3 agreement and be privately built and funded. The project may require some road improvements.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

It is too early in the process to fully estimate the fiscal impact of the SnowWorld opportunity. The U.S. alone has over 14 million active skiers and 8 million snowboarders. It is anticipated the opportunity will be highly cash flow positive to the county. The county and state investments are anticipated to be limited to some road improvements and the costs associated with negotiating the P3 agreement. It is anticipated the county will see positive fiscal impacts from the following areas:

- Visit Fairfax (The Fairfax County agency focused on tourism) conservatively estimates the facility would generate **\$750K annually in sales and hotel taxes alone** based on the preliminary attendance projections provided by SnowWorld. It is estimated to generate \$25M in direct economic impact with an additional \$40 million on indirect impact. Please see the assumptions and detailed projections in Appendix A for a breakdown of this data.
- The project will also generate **lease revenue from the lease of the land** at the county-owned Lorton landfill site and to NOVA Parks for the Occoquan Regional Park. It is too early to project these revenues.
- The EDA is working on estimates for the **real estate, BPOL, and property taxes**.
- General positive economic impact to restaurants, hotels and businesses in the area
- **Synergies with the other public facilities in the area** (Workhouse Arts Center, Laurel Hill Golf Course and NOVA Parks banquet facilities) by improving their cash flow and reducing taxpayer burdens.
- **Job creation at all salary levels.**

## **Capital Requirements**

There are no anticipated capital requirements for the County other than potential road improvements.

## **Estimated One-Time Expenses**

At this time, there are no identified one-time expenses with the exception of the costs to review and negotiate the P3 agreement.

## **Estimated Recurring Expenses**

At this time, there are no identified recurring expenses.

## **Community Benefits**

In addition to the economic benefits to the region, SnowWorld USA would bring a wide range of additional benefits to our community:

- Similar to the (Ski Dubai) facility in Dubai, this facility is likely to attract national and international attention and further the county's overall economic development objectives.
- The facility would provide the ability to host nationally televised competitions increasing Fairfax County's exposure.
- A training facility for the military and ski patrols.
- Attracting and providing year round training for national athletes, trainers and coaches.
- Local middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities would have the opportunity to establish ski and snowboarding clubs, teams and leagues, providing our students with a unique year round experience that currently cannot be had anywhere else in the country.
- Jobs at all salary levels.
- The Workhouse Arts Center will see increased exposure and tourism revenues.
- Laurel Hill Golf Course could also benefit from partnerships with SnowWorld with golf and ski packages.
- NOVA Parks would gain access to hotel rooms close to its new banquet facilities at Occoquan Regional Park.
- Access to this facility could bolster the recruiting efforts of our local businesses, colleges, and universities.
- Providing Fairfax County residents with a unique recreational and family friendly sports option improving the overall quality of life in the county.
- SnowWorld USA would also be a less expensive option than the distant ski resorts currently available, saving families money and shortening their commutes.
- SnowWorld has done some community outreach and the feedback has been positive.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The fiscal and community benefits of this opportunity are numerous. Due to its significant positive cash flow, economic and sports benefits, the Task Force recommends county staff develop an aggressive timeline for reviewing this opportunity so it does not go elsewhere. The subcommittee recommends that the county and NOVA Parks continue work towards a negotiated P3 agreement and investigate ways to run the P3 negotiation in conjunction with a zoning process. SnowWorld is currently conducting an Independent Market Feasibility study, the production of a video and visual rendering, and engineering and design studies. The subcommittee recommends that this opportunity be one of the opportunities included in the final task force report.

## Appendix A

### Visit Fairfax Assumptions:

- 350,000-400,000 estimated annual visitors to SnowWorld (assume 375,000)
- 75% of visitors from DMV area (262,500 locals; omit from EIC calculation)
- 10% of visitors from Baltimore/Richmond areas (37,500 day day-trippers)
- 15% of visitors from outside DMV area (56,250 visitors; assume 20% are staying in DMV with friends and family = 11,250 people – omit from EIC calculation; assume 80% visitors staying at Fairfax County hotels = 45,000 visitors)
- Hotel Room Rate: \$100
- Number of Room Nights Per Visitor: 1.5
- Number of People Per Room: 2
- 45,000 visitors per Year x 1.5 Room Nights = 67,500 Room Nights = 45,000 Room Nights on Friday; 22,500 Room Nights on Saturday)
- Total attendees: 37,500 Baltimore/Richmond day-trippers + 45,000 visitors = 82,500
- EIC Calculation Categories: Sports; Adult Amateur



Fairfax County, Virginia  
Connect with America

### Event Impact Calculator Detail - SnowWorld DC - 01/03/2018

#### Event Summary

Key Parameters		Key Metrics	
Event Name:	SnowWorld DC	Business Sales (Direct):	\$25,830,517
Organization:	Estimated Economic Impact Account	Business Sales (Indirect):	\$15,105,253
Event Type:	Sports: Adult Amateur	Business Sales (Total):	\$40,935,770
Start Date:	03/02/2018	Jobs Supported (Direct):	12,663
End Date:	03/04/2018	Jobs Supported (Indirect):	1,346
Overnight Attendees:	45000	Jobs Supported (Total):	14,009
Day Attendees:	37500	Local Tax:	\$852,652
:		Net Direct Local Tax ROI:	\$750,610
:		Est. Room Nights Demand:	67,500

#### Direct Business Sales

##### Sales by Source

Attendees Spending:	\$25,738,763	Exhibitor Spending:	\$5,425
Organizer Spending:	\$86,329	Total Event Spending:	\$25,830,517

##### Business Sales by Sector

Industry	Attendees	Organizer	Exhibitor	Total
Lodging	\$6,750,000	\$0*	\$0	\$6,750,000
Transportation	\$1,086,666	\$73,116*	\$3,468	\$1,163,250
Food & Beverage	\$6,978,365	\$0	\$0	\$6,978,365
Retail	\$7,809,816	\$0	\$0	\$7,809,816
Recreation	\$3,113,916	\$0	\$0	\$3,113,916
Space Rental	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Business Services	\$0	\$13,213	\$1,957	\$15,170
Totals	\$25,738,763	\$86,329	\$5,425	\$25,830,517

\* Indicates that the calculator's model defaults were used

#### Economic Impact Details

	Direct	Indirect/Induced	Total
<b>Business Sales</b>	\$25,830,517	\$15,105,253	\$40,935,770
<b>Personal Income</b>	\$8,880,339	\$4,671,302	\$13,551,640
<b>Jobs Supported</b>			
Persons	12,663	1,346	14,009
Annual FTEs	264	28	292
<b>Taxes And Assessments</b>			
<b>Federal Total</b>	\$2,363,295	\$1,322,533	\$3,685,828

<b>State Total</b>	<b>\$1,388,859</b>	<b>\$273,725</b>	<b>\$1,662,584</b>
Sales	\$1,051,967	\$162,382	\$1,214,349
Income	\$114,356	\$60,154	\$174,511
Bed	\$135,000		\$135,000
Other	\$87,535	\$51,189	\$138,725
<b>Local Total</b>	<b>\$750,610</b>	<b>\$102,042</b>	<b>\$852,652</b>
Sales	\$415,894	\$64,197	\$480,091
Income	\$0	\$0	\$0
Bed	\$270,000		\$270,000
Per Room Charge	\$0		\$0
Tourism District	\$0		\$0
Restaurant	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$64,716	\$37,845	\$102,560
Property Tax	\$436,054	\$178,214	\$614,268

#### Event Return On Investment (ROI)

##### Direct

Direct Tax Receipts	\$750,610
DMO Hosting Costs	\$0
Direct ROI	\$750,610
Net Present Value	\$750,610
Direct ROI (%)	0

##### Total

Total Local Tax Receipts	\$852,652
Total ROI	\$852,652
Net Present Value	\$852,652
Total ROI (%)	0

#### Estimated Room Demand Metrics

Room Nights Sold:	67,500	:	
Room Pickup (block only):	67,500	:	
Peak Room Nights:	22,500	:	
Total Visitor Days:	163,125	:	

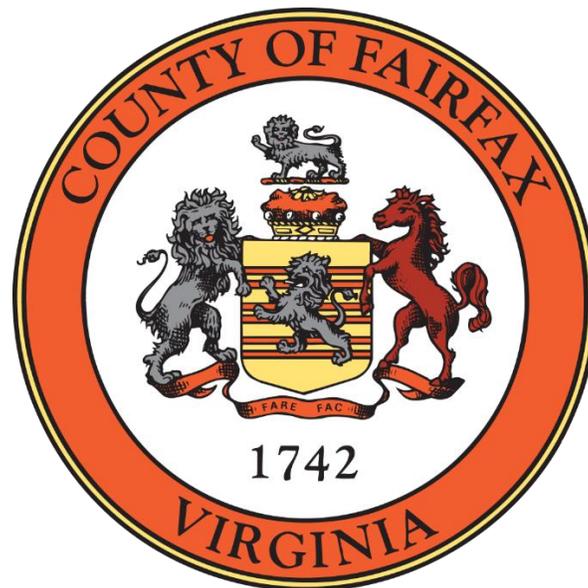
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

### *Mountain Biking*



November 8, 2018  
Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Paul Gilbert**

*Executive Director, Northern Virginia Regional Parks*

**Ernest Rodriguez**

*Chairman, MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiast)  
Chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association*

**Steve DonTigny**

*Executive Director, MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiast)  
Chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association*

**Christine Morin**

*Chief of Staff, Supervisor Dan Storck*

The Subcommittee on Mountain Biking was established by the Sports Tourism Task Force to explore how mountain biking could become a more central part of Fairfax County's sports tourism infrastructure. This study looks at the current state of mountain biking tourism in Fairfax County, and the capital and other resources that might be needed to maximize the potential of this area of tourism.

Using the expertise of MORE provided unique insights into the hobby and sport of mountain biking in the mid-Atlantic region and Fairfax County.

### **The Current State:**

Mountain biking has been a growing hobby for about 25 years. Today, there are more trails available to mountain bikers in Fairfax County than ever before. While there are many trails that are locally popular, Fairfax County has four trails that rank in the top ten mountain bike trails in Virginia and, more significantly, we have the #1, #2, and #3 top ranked trails by users in the state.

The mountain bike community ranks trails based on their technical challenge; they tend to like hills, rocks and other challenging terrain.



*Fountainhead Trail*

The most premium and rare form of mountain bike trails is called "single track." A single track is a narrow trail (usually 36 inches) and often purpose built for mountain biking. A double track is more gravel or dirt road. Single tracks are often designed to be more technically challenging. It is significant that Fairfax County has two premium single track courses, which are #1 ranked Fountainhead Regional Park and #2 ranked Meadowood BLM.

Long linear trails like the Cross County Trail and W&OD Trail serve to connect more technically challenging riding areas. In general, these long straight trails do not rank as high with this community because they often lack the technical challenge that is desired, but they are highly valued as a way to get from one more technical riding area to the next. Fairfax County ranks high in this overall trail connectivity; and there are opportunities for further improvement in connectivity.

## **Top Ranked Fairfax County Mountain Bike Trails**

### **Fountainhead, NOVA Parks in Fairfax Station**

#### **Ranked #1 in Virginia**

Description and rating from MBTProject.com

Trail Description: The mountain bike trail is a single use series of loops that feature multiple short, steep climbs and several fast descents. Originally 4.5 miles long, an additional 1-mile loop was opened in the spring of 2000. Thanks to a partnership between NVRPA and MORE, the trail has been expanded to nearly 15 miles over the past few years. It features a green beginner loop of about 3 miles, an intermediate loop and an advanced loop. The advanced loop starts with an entrance that earns you the "Rock Star" award if you make it due to the steep incline, artfully placed rock step ups and a wooden hairpin turn. Other features include 3 drops, multiple rock gardens going up and downhill and super-sweet jumps. The black loop will keep your heart pounding from both hard, short climbs and thrilling descents.

The series of loops is designed for clockwise traffic. Helmets are required and the park is closed after dark. The trailhead is clearly visible from the parking lot, 0.6 miles from the park entrance. Please be aware that it is easy to pick up significant speed on all sections, even the beginner and intermediate loops, so please ride with caution, especially your first time out.

Access Notes: Please remember that access for mountain bikes at Fountainhead is a privilege, not a right. Ride only on marked trails, do not cut through switchbacks, and do not alter trail features. Cutting trails or building obstacles without permission from the park staff is strictly prohibited and can jeopardize access for all.

#### **History & Background:**

For more than twenty years, local riders have enjoyed the MTB Trail at Fountainhead Regional Park. With the support of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, and built through the cooperative effort of MORE, REI and support from the now defunct FAT City Cycles, the trail opened in 1997. Lifetime MORE member Andy Caruthers, along with current MORE members Paul Hardy and Larry Cautilli, are significantly responsible for the existence of the trail. Featured in the August 2001 issue of Bike Magazine, the Fountainhead trail is described as, "some of the region's most challenging single track."

5 Star	62%
4 Star	30%
3 Star	6%
2 Star	0%
1 Star	1%

#### Rankings

#1 in Virginia

#40 Overall

## Meadowood, BLM on Mason Neck

### Ranked #2 in Virginia

Description and rating from MBTProject.com

Starting from the new Mason Neck Gateway parking area, head down the Gunston Road Connector trail from the kiosk to the South Branch Loop and turn right, taking the trail counterclockwise. You'll ride rolling single-track through mature hardwood forests, crossing a Dominion Power gas line, before reaching your first intersection. Bear left to continue on South Branch Loop. From here, turning right will put you on the Old Colchester Connector and a small parking area.

Climb the hill from the intersection, passing the exit to Boss Trail. Just after you crest the hill, you'll see the entrance to Boss Trail. Turn left and up onto the boardwalk that starts Boss and hang on for a good time!

Once you climb the hill at the end of Boss Trail back to South Branch Loop, head left to continue counterclockwise on the loop. Ride past the entrance to Boss Trail and cross the old fire road to start the longest sustained downhill of the ride, dropping from this high point to South Branch Loop's stream valley. This downhill is fast, tight and fun. However, it's also open to two-way traffic, so yield to those poor folks slogging up the climb! 3/4 of the way down, you'll cross the equestrian trails via a gravel and rock-armored intersection. Give a friendly shout or bell ring and be prepared to yield to horse traffic.

The downhill empties out onto the boardwalk crossing South Branch Loop. From there, you begin a series of short climbs and rolling single-track. The boardwalk comes equipped with benches, and is a great spot for a food stop. You'll pass the exit of Yard Sale Trail and climb a series of bermed turns, before passing the exit of Stinger Trail and topping out on a bluff over the stream valley marked with a stone cairn. The entrance to Stinger Trail is just around the corner.

Turn left onto the Stinger Trail and enjoy the tight, bench cut single track. A series of short descents and climbs brings you back to South Branch Loop below the bermed climb. Turn left to continue counterclockwise and pass the exit to Stinger Trail this time. You'll cross the fire road and a small stream before reaching the entrance to Yard Sale Trail.



Turn left off of South Branch Loop to start your run down Yard Sale. You'll run into South Branch Loop just after the boardwalk over the stream valley, head left at the intersection, climbing past both Stinger Trail and Yard Sale Trail to continue your lap on South Branch Loop.

This trail accesses the Belmont Boulevard trailhead, and is a leg buster of a climb, but a fun descent back to South Branch Loop. It's definitely worth the extra few minutes.

Back on South Branch Loop, you'll cross the gas line cut again on a paved stone causeway, and have roughly a mile to go to get back to the intersection with the Gunston Road Connector. Turn right to head back to your car at the Mason Neck Gateway lot, or head left to start a second lap on South Branch Loop!

While this route is the most efficient way to hit all of Meadowood's trails on one trip around the loop, it's only an introduction to the system. South Branch Loop flows great in both directions, and riders often session the three bike-specific trails and the Belmont Connector multiple times before continuing on their way. While not the most physically demanding trail out there, Meadowood's smiles to miles' ratio is through the roof!

### **History & Background**

Meadowood is one of the few BLM properties in the east, and it began life as a private farm and equestrian area. BLM acquired the property in 2001, with the goal of providing open space for recreation, environmental education, and wild horse and burro interpretation.

In 2011, BLM began planning a mountain bike trail system and enlisted the help of MORE, the local club and IMBA chapter, for help with fundraising and volunteer work.

After a nearly 5-year effort, the trail system is now fully built out, and offers area riders a virtual buffet of single track flavors, from rolling single track through the woods to jump lines and progressive wooden features. One of the newest trail systems in the region, it's quickly become a favorite. This is in part due to the awesome wooden features on Boss Trail, and that it's easily accessible from DC, the Northern Virginia suburbs and Reagan National Airport.

5 Star	49%
4 Star	44%
3 Star	7%
2 Star	0%
1 Star	0%

#### Rankings

#2 in Virginia

#64 Overall

### Wakefield, FCPA in Annandale

#### Ranked #3 in Virginia

Description and rating from MBTProject.com

North trails and south trails are separated by the Wakefield Park Road. North trails are accessible from multiple points on the other side of baseball and soccer fields behind the Audrey Moore RECenter. There is a double track greenway behind the park baseball fields.

A right turn (North) will go to Wakefield North Trails along Accotink Creek and to access the \"Bowl\" section, follow orange and yellow trail blazes.

A left turn (South) on the greenway will lead to a tunnel crossing under Braddock Rd and on to the Lake Accotink Network trails.

To access Wakefield South trails from Audrey Moore RECenter parking lot entrance, go left across the footbridge and look left for a tunnel crossing Wakefield Park Road. South trails are marked with blue trail blazes.

The Wakefield trail system is composed of three trails referred as the creek trail, the racetrack and the bowl. Each section has its own character and you can mix and match to suit your tastes.



Head out beyond the softball fields and the powerlines and you run into the creek trail. In terms of difficulty, the creek trail is the easiest of the three. Although it's relatively flat as far as mountain biking trails go, it has enough twists and turns to keep anyone entertained. Novice riders will gain from the cornering skills needed to navigate this trail, while speed demons will enjoy the trance-like state which comes from ripping this trail at top speed. But, please, always be courteous and yield to hikers and other trail users since there are quite a few on this trail.

Go to the north end of the creek trail and start looking for some upward going trails on the left and you have found the racetrack section, so named because of the PVC-sponsored race series held there. The racetrack section is a maze of short and steep climbs and fun, twisting downhills with an occasional log pile thrown in to blow your rhythm. Add a few fire road climbs under the powerlines, and you have a bona fide XC race course.

The bowl is the section of trail near the parking lot on the right side of the park access road as you enter the park. A couple of trailheads are clearly visible from the parking lot: one behind the playground area, and another on the south end of the parking lot.

5 Star	22%
4 Star	41%
3 Star	30%
2 Star	7%
1 Star	0%

### Rankings

#3 in Virginia

#293 Overall

Laurel Hill

## Laurel Hill, FCPA in Lorton

### Ranked #10 in Virginia

Description and rating from MBTProject.com

There are many trailheads to access the trail system, but two of the most utilized are at the Equestrian Center and the Giles Run Meadow Park parking lots. From the Giles Run parking lot, the trail starts right next to the road (Giles Run Meadow Trail), then ride natural surfaced single track until you reach Giles Run stream and walk your bike across large boulders. Continue riding until you reach the Fairfax County Cross County Trail (CCT) and take a left/south. Giles Run will be below you at times, which can be seen through the trees.

There are some bridges and pine groves. Ride the CCT until you reach Lorton Road; the single track continues once you cross the road. There are two trailheads after the road crossing (one immediately afterward) and the other about 500 feet along the former railroad bed.



You are now entering onto the Pasture Loop. You can go left or right, but once you reach the gravel road, you can go further south and meet up with the more challenging Slaughter House Lake Accotink Loop (the old Slaughterhouse Loop is at the trailhead. Do the loop and backtrack on the same gravel road uphill and take your first right. This trail will take you behind the old Dairy Farm building (soon to be the Equestrian Center stables).

This trail will dump you out back on the Pasture Loop; turn right and follow the tree line. The Power Station Loop trailhead will be on your right.

Make sure you take the second trailhead, which will make you do the loop clockwise. About 2/3's into the loop there are some table top jumps.

Exit this loop back on the Pasture Loop away from the trash incinerator property; take a right fork up to and across Furnace Road and do the Apple Orchard Loop (either direction is equally fun).

Cross back over Furnace Road and back onto the Pasture Loop. You'll soon see the Equestrian Center and you've completed most of the trail.

Continue riding until you run out of time.

5 Star	12%
4 Star	48%
3 Star	33%
2 Star	6%
1 Star	0%

#### Rankings

#10 in Virginia

#292 Overall

## **Mountain Bike Festivals/Events**

Currently, Fountainhead's top ranked mountain bike trail attracts visitors from hundreds of miles away throughout the year. On any nice weekend it is easy to spot out-of-town visitors in the parking lot that have come to the area just to ride this well-known trail.

### **Current Local Events:**

#### **Venture Quest Adventure Race**

Held in September at Fountainhead Regional Park

This event can attract around 300 people for an adventure race that includes mountain biking, trail running and paddling on the Occoquan Reservoir.

#### **MORE NOVA EPIC**

Held at Lake Fairfax a few years ago

This mountain bike ride/event attracted around 350 participants

#### **MORE Spring Fling**

Held at Wakefield and Accotink parks including CCT

This ride/event will likely attract about 200 participants

## **Large events that could be a model**

#### **MoCo Epic**

This annual event is hosted by MORE in the fall and uses 11 parks and 75 miles of trail in Montgomery County Maryland. This two-day event has grown to now include about 1,000 participants.

#### **Shenandoah Mountain 100 Backcountry Mountain Bike Race**

This event held in Stokesville, VA in the fall for 20 years and attracts about 1,000 participants.

#### **Dirt Fest**

Sponsored by Dirt Rag Magazine and held at Raystown Lake near Pittsburg PA.

This multi-day event attracts 3,000 participants. It features demonstrations from most of the major bike and equipment manufacturers as well as multiple rides and social events. Participants primarily camp at this large park in Western Pennsylvania. In 2017 Dirt Rag Magazine added an additional venue to accommodate demand for multi-day events at Big Bear West Virginia. The venue at Big Bear also provides camping opportunities.

## Riverrock Festival

Sponsored by Dominion Power, this 3-day festival in Richmond sees 10,000 participants a year. The event includes a wide range of activities, including concerts, 5K and adventure runs, dog jumping contests, paddle boarding and kayak events and micro-breweries. Biking events include trail rides, stunt riding, and what they call the Urban Assault Mountain Bike Race.

*“These are social events to unite outdoors activities”*

Ernest Rodriguez, Chairman of MORE

## Opportunities for Fairfax County

With four of the top ranked mountain bike sites in Virginia, Fairfax County is well situated to expand sport tourism in this area.

### Phase I: Make the best all it can be

Fountainhead is the #1 mountain bike trail in Virginia because there had been a lot of work by MORE and NOVA Parks to develop it for this purpose. Building on this foundation, there are a number of capital improvements that could further distinguish this site and make it more of a destination site. These improvements would include putting a “pump track” next to the parking lot. This is a small track with steep hills that provides a place for technical training and X game-style trick riding. Construction of a 3-mile beginners loop would provide the full range of riding experiences. Construction of a building that could be used for bike rentals, repair and concessions, in addition to restrooms to better service the mountain bike user. These improvements, which could be made for \$690,000, would solidify Fountainhead as the best mountain biking facility in the state, driving more tourism.

<b>FOUNTAINHEAD BIKE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
<b>Mini Golf Demolition and Disposal</b>	50,000
<b>Construction of Dirt Pump Track</b> - According to the trail contractor I spoke with, a decent pump track could be easily built within the mini golf footprint (approx. 200' by 200') for \$40,000	40,000
<b>Construct New Separate Beginners Mountain Bike Trail</b> - According to the trail contractor I spoke with, a really nice size beginners loop would be 3 miles long. He said all our current mountain bike trails total 15 miles (I did not know they were that long). Cost to construct trails are \$3 per foot. Therefore, a new 3-mile loop would cost \$50,000.	50,000
<b>Construct Support Building with Concessions, Bike Rental/Repair, and Restrooms</b> - I included restrooms in here because existing restrooms are pretty old and run down. They are a few hundred feet away, not sure if they meet ADA, and county may require them. A decent size building (2,000 sf) with mechanical systems and restrooms could cost around \$400,000, including design and permitting fees. This number could vary some depending on if we need additional septic or tie into existing ones, and exactly what type of concessions we want.	400,000

**Site plan, BMP Facilities, E&S Controls Etc.** - This is hard to estimate because we are not sure how the county will view the 3- mile loop trail. I will assume here that we will have to do a full site plan

for the trail and include E&S controls most of the way. There will also be a lot of survey work involved. The total cost for this line includes site plan, BMP facilities, E&S controls and misc. for all three

150,000

elements of the project - pump track, beginners loop and new building.

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**TOTAL**

690,000

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## Phase II: Develop the large multi-day festival

While there are mountain bike trails all over the County, the concentration of top ranked sites in South County offers a unique opportunity. While Fountainhead, Laurel Hill, Meadowood and Wakefield all lack the room and facilities to host a multi-day event attracting thousands of visitors, they could be combined with other resources to achieve this goal. Centrally located between Fountainhead, Laurel Hill and Meadowood is Occoquan Regional Park. Occoquan is a large capacity park that could handle 2,000 + participants. This spring, the renovation of this site was completed, and they include a 5K loop trail inside the park, and a large shelter area that could be the focal point for a large gathering. Occoquan is also on the water and a short paddle to Mason Neck State Park.

This site could provide the central point for running, paddling, concerts and a central gathering point for a mountain bike-themed festival.

It is directly adjacent to the Laurel Hill mountain bike trail, and accessible via the Cross County Trail to Wakefield. While geographically close, there are some connectivity issues with bike access to both Meadowood and Fountainhead.

While site-specific access issues and trail construction would need to be done, it is reasonable to assume good connectivity could be established between these sites with reasonable effort. If the trail access and improvements could be made for less than \$300,000, then all the improvements to both Fountainhead and trail connections could be accomplished for less than \$1 million.



**Promoters and Sponsors:**

Riverrock has a number of sponsors including Dominion Power as the title sponsor. Dirt Fest has one of the leading mountain bike magazines (Dirt Rag), and many bike and accessory firms as sponsors. To host an event of this size, it would take a professional festival promoter to organize the logistics.

A professional promoter to organize, market and run the event could cost around \$50,000. Buying out all uses of Occoquan Park (wedding receptions, shelter rentals and more) over a 3-day period in a prime season would also cost around \$50,000. Impacts on the other parkland uses would not be at a level that it would preclude other uses.

The goal for a festival like this is to attract enough sponsorship and generate enough event revenue that the fixed costs for hosting the event are defrayed over time.

**Mountain Biker Tourist Profile:**

In 2015, Singletracks.com did a survey of over 1,400 mountain bike enthusiasts about their travel habits. These are the kind of enthusiasts who would likely travel to a bike-themed festival in Fairfax County. These enthusiasts spend thousands of dollars on gear, and identify with mountain biking culture and social network. Some of the results include:

- The average mountain biker took 2 mountain bike-specific overnight trips in 2014.
- Mountain bikers spent \$382.25 on average per trip.
- The average mountain bike trip lasted 2.7 nights.
- Mountain bikers travel 566 miles on an average trip. Half of the trips are 250 miles or less from home.
- The top mountain bike travel months are May, June and September.
- 62% travel to ride new trails.
- 22% travel to see new places.

### **Tourism Economic Impact:**

Visit Fairfax did an economic analysis on two primary data points. One was an event in the first few years that would attract 2,000 visitors with 20% staying in hotels. This seems like a reasonable assumption if one considers having a professional event promoter and the general popularity of Northern Virginia as a destination.

Over time, it is likely that this event would continue to grow. The second data point assumes growth to 8,000 participants. Such an event would require off-site parking, and the scheduling of different events and activities at a number of sites to spread the group over a larger area. Considering that Riverrock in Richmond sees 10,000 participants, it is a reasonable assumption that this event could grow to this scale. As the number of participants goes up, the percentage staying in hotels would also increase to 25%.

These two data points can be seen as years 1-3 for the 2,000 participants, and years 7-10 for the 8,000 participants.

<b>Early Years: 2,000 participants @ 20% hotel stays</b>	<b>Later Years: 8,000 participants @ 25% hotel stays</b>
Direct Business Sales:	Direct Business Sales:
Lodging, transportation, food, other = \$166,895	Lodging, transportation, food, other = \$819,294
Local Taxes (excluding property) = \$5,160	Local Taxes (excluding property) = \$25,483
Property Tax = \$3,982	Property Tax = \$19,543
Total annual local taxes = \$9, 142	Total annual local taxes = \$45,026

### **Non-Economic Benefits:**

In addition to overall economic activity and enhanced local taxes that mountain biking tourism presents, there are numerous other positives to such a proposal. First and foremost, Fairfax County residents would benefit from enhanced mountain bike facilities and trails. Local enthusiasts would get access to a destination quality event close to home.

With its combination of nature and adventure, mountain biking has a positive image. By hosting a significant destination festival, Fairfax County would gain some of the positive brand qualities of mountain biking. This could help attract both new businesses to locate and new families and individuals to choose Fairfax County as the community they want to call home.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

With four of the top ten ranked mountain bike trails in Virginia in or near the south county area, there exists the foundation to build a vibrant mountain biking tourism strategy. \$690,000 in capital improvements could make the number one ranked Fountainhead location more of a year-round

destination site for mountain bike enthusiasts from all over the east coast. The economic value of this is in addition to Visit Fairfax number for a multi-day festival.

A significant mountain bike-themed festival could be held at a number of sites in south county, with the central activity site at Occoquan Regional Park. This event could see 2,000 participants annually in the first few years, and over time grow to an 8,000-person festival. Other festivals in the mid-Atlantic states show that this potential exists. Between promoters and sites, such a festival would have an upfront cost of \$100,000. Securing at least one major title sponsor could offset all or most of this up front cost. Another challenge in making the large festival a success is to improve trail access between Fountainhead, Occoquan, and Meadowood BLM. There is reason to believe that these accesses could be significantly improved over a couple of years if this were a high priority.

The Task Force recommended that this opportunity be referred to the Board of Supervisors Economic Development Support Fund for possible investment.

Building on the strengths Fairfax County already has in this field could also further enhance the brand of the County, as it would become associated with the cool and adventuresome image of the mountain biking culture.



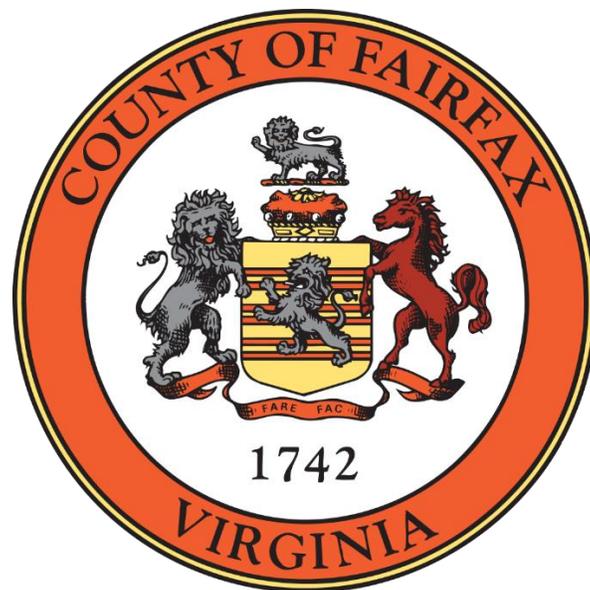
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Rectangle Field Complex*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Bill Bouie**

*Chairman, Fairfax County Park Authority*

## **Background**

The Task Force identified the need for clustered rectangle fields in Fairfax County to be responsive to both sports tourism demand and a significant shortage of fields for community use. Currently, the largest cluster of rectangle fields in the County is only 3. In order to effectively attract tournaments and sports tourism events, it has been determined that up to 8 clustered fields will be required. Below is a list of possible locations:

- Barron Cameron Park
- Laurel Hill Sports Complex
- Patriot Park
- NOVA Parks
- Rock Hill / Quinn Farm Park
- GMU west of campus
- Laurel Hill Park and South County School
- Southwest Youth Association “Field of Dreams”

## **Opportunity**

Baron Cameron Park was identified as the greatest short term opportunity to develop a cluster of rectangle fields. The 60-acre park that was transferred to the Park Authority from the Board of Supervisors in 2011. A Master Plan revision was approved June 25, 2014. Every effort should be made to develop the plan with a sports tourism component.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The subcommittee identified the opportunity to provide up to 7-8 lighted full size synthetic turf rectangular fields at Baron Cameron Park. The park can also support adequate parking and facilities such as restrooms, concessions and, spectator seating. When not being used for tournament play, the fields will provide an additional benefit to meet the need for athletic fields to serve the planned increase in population in the Reston Metro corridor.

Baron Cameron Park is uniquely located within two miles of Reston Town Center and two Metro stations as well as within 10 miles of Dulles International Airport. The location will provide various transportation options to the park along with desirable lodging and restaurant options close to the complex.

Additional lighted rectangular synthetic turf fields close by at Lake Fairfax Park and South Lakes High School can be used to host larger events. Lake Fairfax Park also provides an alternative lodging option in its RV Camping Area as well as the Water Mine waterpark in the summer season. The Park Authority is currently working on the site plan for redeveloping Baron Cameron Park with funding from the 2016 Park Bond. The Subcommittee recommends the opportunity at Baron Cameron Park, together with surrounding fields, be proposed as a sports tourism rectangle field complex.

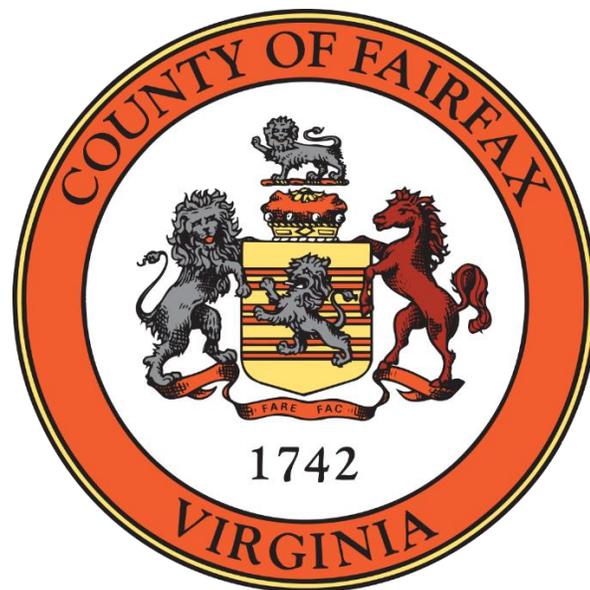
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Diamond Field Complex*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Mike Thompson, Jr**

*Fairfax County Park Authority*

*Visit Fairfax Board*

*Athletic Council*

**Background**

The Task Force identified the need for diamond fields in Fairfax County to be responsive to both sports tourism demand and a significant shortage of fields for community use. In order to effectively attract tournaments and sports tourism events, it has been determined that 4 clustered diamonds will be required.

**Opportunity**

Patriot Park North was identified as the greatest short term opportunity to develop a cluster of diamond fields. The park has been master planned for the artificial turf cluster of four 90 ft. diamonds with movable fences, concession stands and other sports tourism amenities. The project is approximately \$5M short of the funds needed for development.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Subcommittee recommends the Fairfax County and the Fairfax County Park Authority work to fund the final \$5M to develop this complex with a sports tourism component. The Subcommittee also recommends that Fairfax County work with the Springfield Youth Association (SYA) to move some community use to other 90-foot diamonds.

# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Aquatic Competition Facility*



November 8, 2018  
Fairfax County, Virginia

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Pat Herrity (Chair)**

*Fairfax County Board of Supervisors*

**Megan McLaughlin**

*Fairfax County School Board*

**Background**

Competitive swimming has continued to grow in Fairfax County and the surrounding jurisdictions. A recent study in 2017 showed swimming ranks No. 3 in popularity of sports activities and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> as the most-popular sport in the U.S. There are a large number of youth and masters teams that swim year round in Fairfax County. Outside of the aquatic center at George Mason University and the recently completed St James, Fairfax County lacks a state of the art aquatic competition facility.

The GMU facility (The Jim McKay Natatorium) is 25 yards by 50 meters and surrounded by an all tile deck. The facility has wireless pace clocks, state of the art filtration system and bleachers. St James also has Aquatics Center featuring Olympic-sized competition pool and has been well received by the competitive swimming community.

**Recommendation**

The Task Force recommends Fairfax County investigate the feasibility and economics of developing one of the current or future Olympic pools into an aquatic center for larger swim meets. Facility recommendations would include a separate warm up pool, separate locker rooms, spectator seating, wireless timers, a diving well, and a state of the art filtration system. In addition the county should gather additional details on the number of youth and master swimmers and clubs.

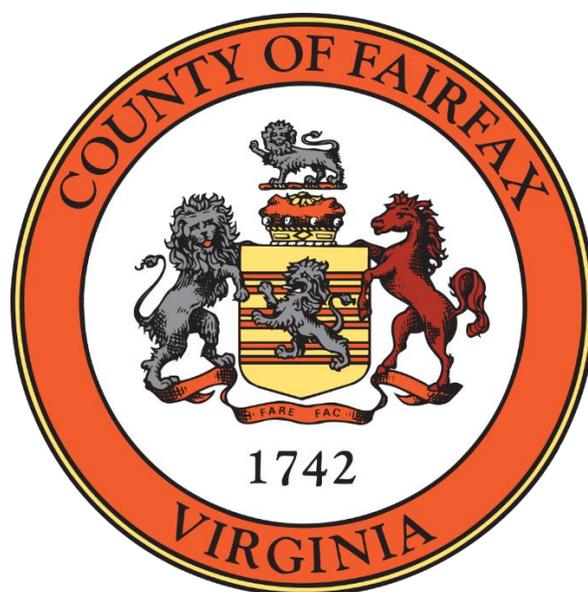
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Field House and Indoor Track Facilities*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Bill Curran (Chair)**

*Director, Fairfax County Office of Student Facilities*

**Chris Leonard**

*Director, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services*

**Craig Esherick**

*Associate Professor, GMU Sports Management*

**David Bowden**

*Director, Fairfax County Planning and Development*

**Eric Kulczycky**

*Sales Manager, Visit Fairfax*

**Background**

As seen with the popularity of the South Run Recreation Center field house, additional field houses in Fairfax County are an important component when planning new facilities and amending master plans at existing recreational facilities in Fairfax County. The South Run field house is 24,000 square feet and lined with a 160 foot by 100-foot synthetic turf field. The field is also lighted and has restrooms on premises. It is immensely popular year round especially during winter months. Originally constructed as an equestrian center it now used by youth organizations for soccer, lacrosse, training, etc.

At this time the only other multi use field house in Fairfax County which is not owned or operated by the County is the George Mason University Field House. This is a much larger field house than South Run at 110,000 square feet, was recently renovated and now includes a 200-meter indoor track that now includes new bleachers, seven racquetball courts, a multi-use court that allows up to four different games at once, a new strength and conditioning center, sauna, and outdoor fields and tracks with bleacher seating.

As part of the renovations a 600-square-foot adjoining room was added to include a state-of-the-art 20-foot-wide by 10-foot-long training sand pit. Because of both size and the quality of this field house it has hosted the Mobil Invitational and the USA Track and Field Golden Spike Invitational Indoor Meet. The GMU Field House is largely unavailable to the county and school sports teams.

**Opportunity:**

An indoor track ranks high on the list of athletic facility needs of the school system as there is not presently an indoor track in Fairfax County. Additionally, FCPS and all other Northern Virginia Schools will likely lose access to any indoor track facilities within the next academic year. The County also has a shortage of hard court surfaces for basketball, volleyball, and pickleball. A large field house could also serve as a place to hold high school graduations which are currently held at GMU at a cost of approximately \$20,000 per school.

**Recommendation:**

The subcommittee recommends that the county expeditiously engage a consultant to investigate the economic feasibility of a large Field House/Hard Court/Indoor Track facility as a facility funded by sports tourism dollars but available for community use. A facility like this is currently being proposed in Virginia Beach.

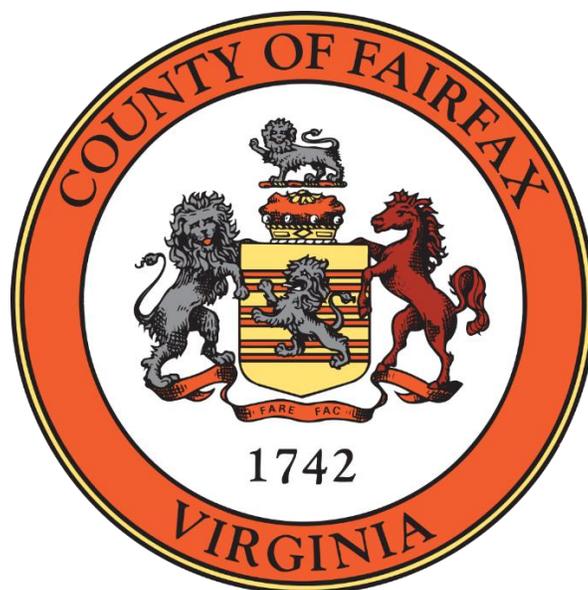
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Esports*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Barry Biggar**

*President & CEO, Visit Fairfax*

**Eric Kulczycky**

*National Sales Manager, Visit Fairfax*

**Mike Thompson, Jr.**

*Fairfax County Park Authority Board*

*Visit Fairfax Board*

*Athletic Council*

## **The Opportunity**

Esports (short for “electronic sports”, also known as competitive video game playing) has been growing by leaps and bounds over the last three decades. This industry has evolved from people playing games like *Pong* and *Pac-Man* recreationally to individuals and teams competing professionally, playing complex, full-color, full-motion video games such as *League of Legends*, *Dota*, *Counter-Strike*, and *Fortnite*, at events in sold-out stadiums, convention centers, and other large venues.

Esports has become a global spectator pastime and a huge business enterprise. Worldwide, approximately 191 million people are classified as esports “enthusiasts” and 194 million are “occasional viewers”. In 2017, this industry generated revenues totaling \$660 million (from media rights, advertising, sponsorship, merchandise & tickets, and game publisher fees) and is expected to grow 128% to \$1.5 billion by 2020.

With 22% of American males between the ages of 21 and 35 watching competitive gaming frequently – making this sport as popular as baseball and ice hockey – it’s no wonder that even colleges and professional sports teams are getting in on the action. More than 60 schools in the U.S. (which are members of the National Association of Collegiate Esports) are currently offering esports scholarships, and many other universities like George Mason University offer an esports club with access to free space and a small budget. And traditional sports team owners are purchasing esports franchises in the hopes of capitalizing on this burgeoning market segment.

For example, Washington Wizards majority owner Ted Leonsis and Golden State Warriors co-owner Peter Guber recently joined forces to acquire a non-basketball-specific esports franchise, Team Liquid; and the owners of the Philadelphia 76ers purchased two esports teams as well.

## **Expansion**

Stakeholders in Washington, DC are investing aggressively and heavily in this market. In collaboration with Events DC (which owns the esports team, NRG), Monumental Sports is building a new arena for the Washington Mystics women’s basketball team (and a team in the NBA’s developmental G League) that will have 4000+ seats, two practice courts, as well as an area for esports...all providing multiple options for video game tournaments of different sizes.

Over the last few years due to its economic impact potential, convention and visitor bureaus throughout the United States have paid close attention to the Esports industry as major

competitions have become significant tourism drivers for many cities. The projected growth trend suggests that destinations can leverage this phenomenon to boost visitation and engage members of their communities. To make inroads in this market, Visit Fairfax is currently providing sponsorship, marketing, and other event support services to two clients actively involved in this space:

### **PSISTORM Gaming**

PSISTORM Gaming is an E-sports team that hosts three days of competition inside the Government Center at Celebrate Fairfax June of every year. While the festival's e-sports area undoubtedly draws local participants, many travel from North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, New York, and Missouri to compete. (Usual attendance: 500+ people; Total prize money: \$5000). Based out of Fairfax County, PSISTORM competes internationally and is known for having world-class competitors in two popular games, *StarCraft* and *Heroes of the Storm*.

The team is made up of local players as well as several from Asia and Europe. PSISTORM has five additional tournaments planned in Fairfax County over the next 10 months and is currently working towards securing the DC metro rights for a new professional esports league: EBL (Esports Battle League).

### **FIAD Entertainment Group:**

FIAD Entertainment Group is a family-run, Northern Virginia company that will be hosts a gaming and entertainment festival, GEXCon, at the Dulles Expo Center at the end of each summer. In an environment providing enjoyment for both recreational and competitive players alike, GEXCon features games using PCs, consoles, and arcades, and will showcase vendors offering the latest merchandise, artwork, and indie games. (Expected attendance: 1800+ people; Total prize money: \$10,000).

For several years, FIAD held this festival at the Fredericksburg Expo and Conference Center but was interested in securing a new venue with the potential of attracting even more attendees. Visit Fairfax assisted FIAD to secure the Dulles Expo Center, which will provide enough space for GEXCon to grow in a more geographically advantageous location.

## **Esports in Fairfax County**

The CAVE Gaming Center, located at the University Mall in Fairfax, has been one of the county's main video gaming hubs since 2015 and is another major player in this market. This venue rents time on its 50 computers (equipped with 24" screens) and for use of designated spaces, providing customers with access to a variety of PC- and console-based games. In addition, the venue subscribes to *Twitch*, the industry's main online platform (currently with 15 million daily active users) that lets players watch other people play video games, as well as broadcast their gameplay to the world. The CAVE hosts small one-day tournaments on a weekly basis, as well as larger two-day competitions (with prize money up to \$2000) that attract visitors who stay overnight in the county. For example, in May 2018, 23 professional players from out-of-town competed for two days in the popular game, *Hearthstone*.

Another local gaming center with less equipment and less focus on tournaments is Seoul PC, located in Annandale. Additional venues with the potential of hosting e-sports competitions in the county include EagleBank Arena, NOVA Field House, GMU's Center for the Arts; Wolf Trap's Filene Center, movie theatres, vacant mall spaces, hotel ballrooms, and empty buildings that can be renovated. Indeed, esports is a potentially lucrative sports tourism market for Fairfax County. Local experts agree that it will take time to establish the county's reputation as an esports destination. NOVA has hired an Esports coach and established an Esports facility. Professional Esports teams are being formed around the country. The following link provides more information on Esports: "*E-Sports to grow substantially and near billion dollar revenues in 2018*" <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattperetz/2018/02/21/report-esports-to-grow-substantially-and-near-a-billion-dollar-revenues-in-2018/#458a338e2b01>

## **Recommendation**

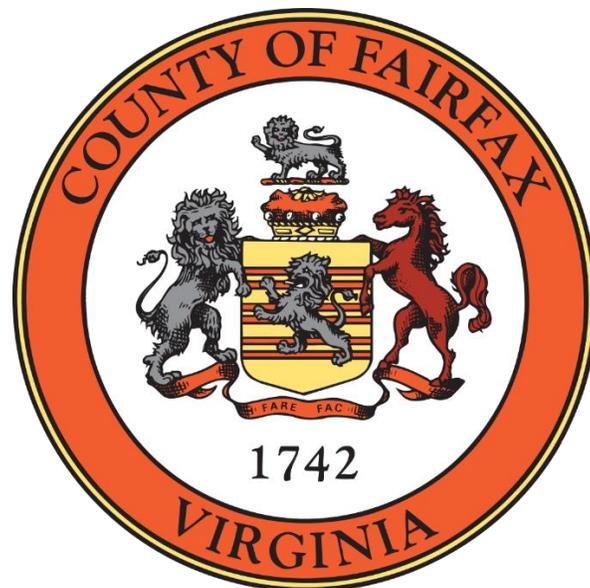
The Subcommittee recommends that County stakeholders provide in kind and financial sponsorships to help offset various costs to help make tournaments more profitable and continue to partner with the local Esports community to establish a successful track record of quality events that could encourage the growth and tourism in the County and examine policy changes that could encourage the growth and tourism opportunities in Esports. FCPS should also consider making bandwidth and additional computer systems available to help grow Esports in Fairfax County. It is anticipated that Esports will be a recognized VHSL sport in a few years

# FAIRFAX COUNTY SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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## Subcommittee Report:

*Tennis Complex*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Taylor Chess**

*President, Peterson Companies*

**Dave Foreman**

*Chief of Staff, Supervisor Pat Herrity*

**Scott Sizer**

*Policy Coordinator, Office of the County Executive*

**Aimee Vosper**

*Deputy Director, Fairfax County Park Authority*

**Overview**

With the closure of several Fairfax County indoor tennis complexes there is a shortage of indoor tennis facilities in the county. The Four Seasons tennis complex in Merrifield was recently closed to make room for a new development. There are currently 255 tennis courts spread out across Fairfax County, but there are no tennis complexes capable of holding tournaments and there are limited indoor facilities.

**Opportunities**

The U.S. Tennis Association has expressed interest in constructing new tennis facilities in Fairfax County. This facility would help reduce the shortage of tennis courts in the County as well as provide a state of the art competition facility for both local and national tournaments.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Task Force recommends the County pursue a public private partnership with the U.S. Tennis Association Mid-Atlantic for the development of additional indoor and outdoor tennis facilities with the intent of making them capable of hosting large tennis events provided it is economically feasible.

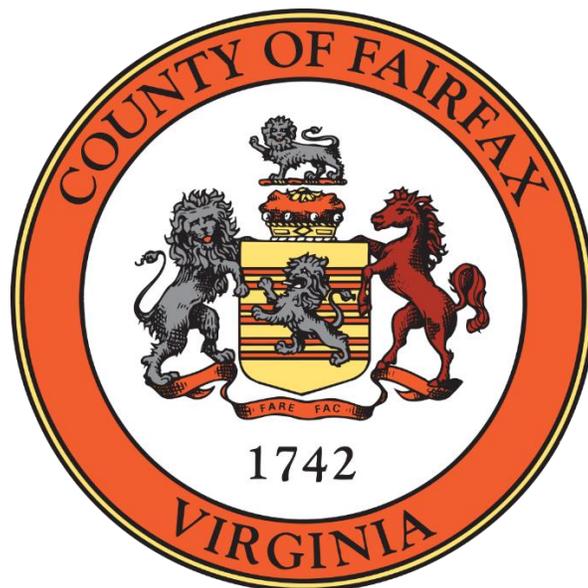
# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## SPORTS TOURISM TASK FORCE

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### Subcommittee Report:

*Potential to Increase Sports Tourism Opportunities Using  
Current Facilities*



November 8, 2018

Fairfax County, Virginia

## **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Barry Biggar**

*President & CEO, Visit Fairfax*

**Eric Kulczycky**

*National Sales Manager, Visit Fairfax*

**Chris Leonard**

*Director, Neighborhood and Community Services*

## **Potential to Increase Current Tourism Opportunities**

Fairfax County has excellent tourism assets, including 100+ hotels at multiple price points, world-class attractions and shopping, a multitude of restaurants for every taste and budget, convenient access to major airports and roadways, and close proximity to our nation's capital, with all its magnificent monuments, museums, and memorials.

Many of the county's sports facilities are also top-notch. Only New York City can match the quantity of rectangular turf fields (91) the county boasts. And very few other destinations in the United States can claim a 450,000-sf indoor mega-sportsplex like The St. James.

With more than a million residents, Fairfax County is a large, sports-minded community that has over the years built a large number of public and private facilities to meet the varied needs of youth and adult athletes. However, Fairfax's ability to host state, regional, national, and international sports events has been limited by various factors associated with its inventory of facilities. These factors include the availability of desired event dates at facilities; the required quality, quantity, and clustering of facilities; rental pricing; policies and regulations affecting the ability to secure and/or use facilities; seating capacity; parking; amenities; and staffing support onsite.

To provide a general sense of sports tourism opportunities in Fairfax County as well as some of the corresponding facility challenges, the below highlights a handful of events that can be attracted to the county (with and without facility and policy modifications), as well as existing events that have growth potential.

### **Multi-Sport Events:**

In the summer of 2015, Fairfax County successfully hosted the World Police and Fire Games (WPFG), one of the largest participatory events in the world. Fairfax welcomed more than 10,000 first-responder athletes from 68 countries who participated in 61 sports at 58 venues over 10 days of competition. WPFG generated an estimated \$80 million in economic impact for the region and demonstrated to national sports governing bodies that the county has the potential to host large-scale, multi-sport competitions.

To leverage the success of WPFG, Visit Fairfax has identified and targeted several events with requirements that match up well with the county's sports tourism assets. They include: **National Senior Games** (10,000 athletes, 19 sports, 10 days of competition), **Transplant Games of America** (1,100 athletes; 20 sports, 10 days of competition), and the **National Corporate Games** (5,000 athletes, 18 sports; 3 days of competition). Each of these mega-events require a variety of indoor and outdoor venues, most of which are in Fairfax's facilities arsenal. Since certain facilities may be lacking in the county, it will be important to form partnerships with other local jurisdictions, as was done for WPFG when venues in Loudoun, Prince William, and other destinations outside of Northern Virginia were used to meet event requirements.

For certain multi-sport events, a hub incorporating an Athletes Village along with a site capable of hosting several events is preferred. This is why destinations with a convention center or large university have a bidding edge and is why the Senior Games and Transplant Games will likely

require a partnership with George Mason University. Another barrier to entry can be rights fees and funding for initial event operating costs. Being able to tap the county's Economic Opportunity Reserve fund would greatly enhance our ability to compete with other destinations.

One multi-sport event that does not require a huge financial investment is the Virginia High School League Spring Jubilee. For many years, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has hosted this three-day, 5-sport, girls-and-boys event that brings hundreds of students from throughout Virginia to compete in state semi-final and final competitions. This year, the Spring Jubilee was held in Henrico County, but FCPS will likely submit a bid at the next opportunity as hosting the event locally saves the school system the expenses of travel to other destinations.

### **Single-Sport Events:**

In Fairfax County, single-sport events make up the vast majority of all travel tournaments. One of the county's biggest sports tourism challenges is the lack of event sites with multiple rectangular fields, diamonds, and indoor basketball courts. Clustered facilities are preferred by event organizers since they create a more festive tournament atmosphere, lower staffing costs, and provide more convenience to attendees, especially college recruiters who prefer not having to travel to multiple sites when evaluating prospects. Given the recent relocations of several homegrown soccer tournaments from Fairfax to other local jurisdictions (even to other states), there is an opportunity to pursue new events that can operate with fewer such fields at multiple locations. Fortunately, the county enjoys numerous facility types that can host tourism-oriented events in a variety of sports, which all combine to generate tremendous economic impact for the county through visitor spending.

- **Rectangular Fields** – The Virginian Elite Soccer Tournament (Memorial Day Weekend) and The WAGS tournament (Columbus Day weekend) are two of Fairfax County's largest soccer events. If tournaments are prioritized over these holiday weekends and sites with two or more turf fields are made available, organizers of both these events would have a strong incentive to keep as many teams as possible in the county. Other sports besides soccer are actively seeking the use of rectangular fields for tournaments. For example, Fairfax Ultimate ("frisbee") requires 10 fields (turf or grass) to host a state championship in May/June 2019. And a local adult sports group is waiting on a request for field allocations to host the 2018 Virginia State Flag Football Championships in December, which requires six fields divided between no more than two or three locations. Other potential rectangular field facilities that could be used for competitions include the SYA Sports Park and Word of Grace Christian Center fields.

**Diamond Fields** – The county has hosted numerous baseball and softball tournaments over the years, some annual and some requiring bids (e.g., International Senior Softball Association World Championships, Gay Softball World Series, Kyle's Kamp Memorial Day Tournament, Virginia State Babe Ruth Championships, etc.) Fairfax Adult Softball has indicated that unless facility improvements are made to Braddock and Wakefield Parks, hosting hi-caliber tournaments will be a challenge. Also, many private baseball and softball tournament organizers are seeking to host events in the county but are encountering difficulty securing

sites with multiple fields. Once the baseball complex at Patriot Park North is completed, the four 90-foot diamonds fields and two 60-foot diamonds (all convertible to softball fields) could generate significant sports tourism if travel tournament directors are provided access.

- **Indoor Courts and Large Spaces** – With enormous potential to boost sports tourism, Hoop Magic, a seven-court basketball facility, opened in Chantilly in 2006. It was one of the few multi-court complexes in the county that could be booked by basketball and volleyball tournament organizers. After several changes in ownership/management over the years and the conversion of six courts from wood to turf, opportunities to host travel events became limited. But the recent acquisition of this property (renamed “The Fiedhouse”) by the Chantilly Youth Association (CYA) brings renewed opportunities as this club intends to reconfigure playing surfaces once again to offer four wood courts by summer 2019. This will put CYA in an excellent position to host travel basketball and volleyball competitions. With the high demand for clustered indoor courts, there is huge potential to host very large basketball and/or volleyball tournaments at The St. James, using this facility’s four basketball courts and the entire FIFA-regulation field, if it can be covered with modular flooring. The St. James has been evaluating an opportunity to host 200+ teams that are on the waiting list of one of the largest volleyball tournaments in country, the Capitol Hill Volleyball Classic, which takes place over President’s Day Weekend at the Washington Convention Center. Other large indoor venues in Fairfax County with the capability of hosting a variety of sports competitions (e.g., gymnastics, fencing, wrestling, etc.) include public and private middle and high schools, George Mason University, NOVA Community College, The nZone, and the Dulles Expo Center. Facilities for esports opportunities also include Wolf Trap’s Filene Center, movie theatres, vacant mall spaces, and empty buildings that can be renovated.
- **Indoor Courts (Racquet Sports)** – Small indoor tennis and racquetball tournaments are typically hosted throughout the year at various private clubs in the county. But a significant new opportunity exists to host regional and national squash tournaments with the addition of eight international-regulation courts at The St. James. Unlike other sports facilities at the megaplex, squash courts will not be programmed for training, leagues, etc. for multiple sports, so there is a willingness to be more open to using these courts for travel tournaments.
- **Sheet of Ice** – With two sheets of ice in one location (and an additional one being considered), the main facility for hosting hockey and figure skating events in the county has been SkateQuest in Reston. MYHockey Tournaments, a national organizer of ice hockey events, currently hosts five competitions from October-March (with a break in December) at SkateQuest and the Ashburn Ice House, with a long waiting list of teams to participate in their events. The St. James has also started to provide ice time in 2018 for tournaments. If another sheet of ice is installed at Mount Vernon RECenter, there will be even greater potential to host mega hockey tournaments in the county.

- **Pools** – The swimming community actively uses the Park Authority’s RECenters for its travel meets since the pool at George Mason University can be difficult to secure. The St. James, with its 10-lane, 50-meter Olympic pool, will provide the Fairfax community with even more facility options for swim meets throughout the year.
- **Outdoor Bodies of Water** – Regattas take place several times throughout the rowing season at Sandy Run Regional Park, with participation by mostly local participants. Despite being a Class A, 1500-meter course that’s considered one of the best competition venues in the country, this facility does not have the required parking infrastructure to host large-scale competitions. If the parking infrastructure is improved, the rowing community would have an even greater appetite to bid on events like the Junior Nationals.
- **Large Outdoor Spaces** – Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon is Fairfax County’s main venue for canine and equine events. Over the years, this facility has been the site of Irish Setter, Rottweiler, and Basset Hound competitions as well as high-level equine events that bring in visitors from up and down the East Coast. Representatives of this facility feel that modernizing footing in the indoor arena and adding horse jumps to the outdoor rings will generate more opportunities to host state and regional events. Laurel Hill Park is another county facility that has enormous potential. The Tough Mudder race is very interested in this location for its Virginia event, but unless there is a way to mitigate costs associated with testing and treating historically protected areas, it will not be feasible to host an event that would require the digging of multiple pits.
- **Bowling Alleys** – Several bowling facilities in the county are capable of hosting large competitions. Bowl America Chantilly is currently bidding to host the 2020 Virginia State Open Bowling Championships in June 2020. Approximately 3000 participants would compete over six consecutive weekends in May and June, potentially generating an estimated \$785,000 in direct visitor spending.

## Recommendations

General recommendations to further develop and improve the county’s sports tourism potential include the following:

- Prioritize the development of clustered rectangular, diamond, and court facilities, and prioritize these facilities for travel tournaments
- Revamp public facility allocation policies to prioritize travel tournaments over holiday and select weekends (e.g., Memorial Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day)
- Turf additional grass fields at sites with existing turf fields (vs. adding a turf field to new site) to maximize clustering
- Expedite the development of tournament-capable sites in the county (e.g., Patriot Park North; Patriot Park; Baron Cameron Park, Laurel Hill; Mount Vernon RECenter, etc.)

- Upgrade fields and amenities at select parks to maximize tournament potential (e.g., Braddock Park, Wakefield Park)
- Ensure capability of reserving facilities several years in advance to facilitate bids for large, multi-sport events with long lead times
- Consult with Visit Fairfax when evaluating the development of facilities and creation of new travel tournaments